

Human Services

Introduction

The Human Services element directs the City's efforts in planning, funding, coordinating, and improving human services delivery to achieve a more socially sustainable, resilient, and equitable community.

The element also helps scope the City's roles and describes many tools used to understand and address Redmond residents' needs for human services.

Redmond's population has grown substantially since the previous Comprehensive Plan update. In addition, our community has become more diverse. Combined with changes to public transportation systems, local economies, and other significant events, there is more need than ever for effective human services.

State & Regional Planning Context

Federal, state, and regional regulations, policies, and funding influence the operations for, delivery of, and availability of human services.

Access to and eligibility for state benefits and programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Apple Health, and Basic Food Program is limited to those who meet restrictive income requirements. Dwindling federal, state, and county funding has made passage of local levies like Best Starts for Kids (a voter-approved initiative passed in 2015) a critical resource in filling gaps.

Fast Facts

- 5.8%: Redmond individuals living below the federal poverty level (2021).
- 250%: Increase in calls from Redmond residents to the King County Crisis Line (3,300 calls per year in 2020 and 2021 compared to 1,300 in 2019).
- 39%: Lake Washington School District Students (12th grade) who reported feelings of depression (2021).
- Poverty disproportionately affects people of color. Of families who are living below the federal poverty level, 1.5% identified as white, 7.4% as Black or African American, 7.8% as Hispanic, and 13.2% as two or more races, respectively (2020).
- \$83,001: Annual City contributions domestic violence services. The Redmond Police Department reports receiving nearly 600 calls for domestic violence-related incidents.
- Suicide counts in Redmond increased in 2020 (7) and 2021 (10), and there was an average of 34 attempts per year, which is more than double 2019, where there were 10 suicide attempts.

State Regulations

The Washington State Growth Management Act does not require a human services element as part of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan ([RCW 36.70A.070](#)).

There is often an intersection between housing planning and human services planning. In 2021, Washington State enacted Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220 into law. The purpose of the bill is to encourage cities to accommodate transitional housing, emergency shelters, and similar homelessness-related facilities through local planning and changes to local development regulations. Part of the signed bill directs local jurisdictions to amend zoning and development regulations to facilitate indoor shelters and housing for the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless. The City has already updated the Redmond Zoning Code to comply with E2SHB 1220 at the time of this existing conditions report. In addition, as part of the comprehensive plan update, proposed Housing element policies support the accommodation of:

1. Indoor emergency shelters,
2. Indoor emergency housing,
3. Transitional housing, and
4. Permanent supportive housing.

The programmatic policies necessary to support these four shelter and housing types most effectively will be in the Human Services element.

Puget Sound Regional Council

The following [VISION 2050](#) policies align with and should be considered in local planning efforts.

- MPP-RC-2: Prioritize services and access to opportunity for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities to ensure all people can attain the resources and opportunities to improve quality of life and address past inequities.
- MPP-RC-3: Make reduction of health disparities and improvement of health outcomes across the region a priority when developing and carrying out regional, countywide, and local plans.
- MPP-DP-16: Address and integrate health and well-being into appropriate regional, countywide, and local planning practices and decision-making processes.
- PP-DP-18: Address existing health disparities and improve health outcomes in all communities.
- MPP-PS-2: Promote affordability and equitable access of public services to all communities, especially the historically underserved. Prioritize investments to address disparities.

The complete VISION 2050 document can be found at <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/vision-2050-plan.pdf>

Countywide Planning Policies

The King County Countywide Planning Policies provide a planning policy framework for all jurisdictions within King County. Specific policies relating to human services include:

- FW-2: Monitor and benchmark the progress of the Countywide Planning Policies towards achieving the Regional Growth Strategy inclusive of the environment, development patterns, housing, the economy, transportation, and the provision of public services, as well as reducing disparities in equity and health outcomes for King County residents. Identify corrective actions to be taken if progress toward benchmarks is not being achieved.
- FW-6: Enable culturally and linguistically appropriate equitable access to programs and services and help connect residents to service options, particularly for those most disproportionately cost-burdened or historically excluded.
- PF-18: Provide human and community services to meet the needs of current and future residents in King County communities through coordinated, equitable planning, funding, and delivery of services by the county, cities, and other agencies.

The overarching goal of the countywide planning policies for human services is that the supportive service needs of all community members are met within all jurisdictions, with special emphasis on those community members that need the most help.

Local Planning & Regulatory Context

Adopted in 2009, Ordinance 2467 established the City's first Human Services Commission. The Commission advises the Mayor and City Council on policies and issues related to human services. The Commission is responsible for making recommendations to the Council on allocation of human services funding.

In 2022 the City developed and adopted the Human Services Strategic Plan. Led by values of equity and inclusion, resiliency, integrity, and centering relationships, this plan outlines a set of strategies and actions for the next five years.

The plan affirmed the City's responsibility for ensuring that residents are able to meet their needs through access to food, shelter, medical care, and more. This can be achieved by allocating resources to:

- Plan for and respond to emerging and emergency needs.
- Invest in an array of services and programs that support community needs.
- Convene and collaborate with partners to identify and implement solutions to complex community challenges across the Eastside.
- Connect community partners toward shared goals and solutions.
- Increase access to services, with a particular focus on addressing language and cultural barriers.
- Support unhoused and unstably housed community members with internal homeless outreach program that coordinates across City departments, non-profit partners, businesses, and the broad community.

Redmond Partnerships

The human services network is strengthened through the City's partnerships with service providers, faith communities, Lake Washington School District, King County Library System (KCLS), nonprofit agencies, and other cities.

Current Conditions

In 2022, Redmond published a [Human Services Needs Assessment](#), which summarizes results from analysis of quantitative data, including census data and local reports and studies, describing Redmond's demographics and relevant community-level trends. The assessment also conducted outreach with community members and partners to gain a better understanding of existing conditions in Redmond. A summary of these conditions indicates that:

- Redmond's population has grown 26% since 2015 and continues to increase in diversity with almost half of Redmond residents identifying as non-white and 45% of community members speaking a language other than English at home, including Spanish, Russian, Mandarin, Hindi, Telugu, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil, Marathi, Bengali, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Sinhalese, and additional Asian Pacific Islander languages.
- While the median income in Redmond is significantly higher than King County, many are struggling to meet their basic needs. In East King County, a family of four would need to earn \$95,488/year to sufficiently meet their basic needs. This equates to earning more than 300% of the defined federal poverty level. According to the 2020 Census, about 2,100 Redmond families have incomes at approximately the federal poverty level. this level.
- Many community members are struggling with mental health issues, which are compounded with lack of available, culturally competent mental health services.
- In 2021, over 1,700 Redmond residents accessed free and/or reduced-cost medical services from HealthPoint, of which 36% were of Hispanic/Latino origin, 14% Asian, and 8% Black/African American.
- The pandemic continues to have disproportionate impact on the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community. Of survey participants, more BIPOC community members reported that they lost their jobs, faced a reduction in hours, experienced a decline in income, or had to find a new job in a different field than their white counterparts.
- The non-profit sector is struggling to respond to increased demand for services, increased cost to deliver services, and hiring and retention of qualified staff.
- There are barriers to and inequities in accessing services. When asked why they didn't access the services they needed many reported not knowing where to go for help (66%), feeling too embarrassed to ask for help (32%), and not knowing if they were eligible for services (27%). BIPOC, low income, and non-English speaking individuals reported significantly more troubles accessing the services they need.

The information provided in this section was first provided in the Redmond Human Services Needs Assessment is available on the City of Redmond [website](#).

Youth in Redmond

Content Warning: This section briefly mentions youth suicide. To skip this content, proceed to the next section.

According to results from the 2021 Healthy Youth Survey, an average of 31% of Lake Washington School District students in grades 8-12 reported feelings of depression. Since 2019, King County's youth mental health system has experienced increased calls to address difficulties related to academic pressure, school closures, social isolation, lack of access quality nutritious food, poor family health and/or due to a death of a family member to COVID-19.¹ Medical centers, such as University of Washington Medicine, Swedish Medical Center and Seattle Children's hospital, have reported a dramatic increase in diagnoses of depression and anxiety for patients under the age of 27 since 2019, including increased suicide attempts. In King County, the number of deaths by suicide among youth under age 18 stayed roughly the same between 2019 and 2020 (14 deaths each year); however, the average age dropped from 16.5 years in 2019 to 14.6 years in 2020. LWSD students who reported seriously considering suicide within the past year is comparable to the state average: Grade 8 (14%), Grade 10 (16%), and Grade 12 (19%).

Income, Education, and Affordability

Redmond is a predominantly affluent community strongly influenced by a high percentage of jobs existing in high technology industries. Redmond community members also skew towards high levels of educational attainment: 72.2% of the community holds a bachelor's degree or higher.²

The median income in Redmond is \$132,188, which is significantly higher than the overall King County median income of \$102,594. While most households in Redmond are faring well, 5.1% people are living below the federal poverty level.

Poverty impacts certain populations disproportionately: 8% of people 65 and older, 8% who identify as Black/African American, 11% who identify as multi-racial, and 12.2% who identify as Latinx, live at or below the federal poverty level. Five hundred twenty-seven families live in poverty, which for a family of four means they were earning less than \$25,750 annually.³

Food Security and Access

Of the Redmond population in 2019, a small portion (500 individuals) were supported by cash public assistance income and about 1,000 households received support from the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as "food stamps").⁴ At the beginning the COVID-19 pandemic, needs related to food were the second-most

¹ Sources: Collins et al., Mental Health Among Youth and Young Adults in King County, WA, 2021.

² Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

³ Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

⁴ Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

common reason for a King County resident to call seeking assistance with social services in spring 2020.⁵

Food insufficiency almost doubled during the pandemic: about 9% of adults in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties combined reported in June 2020 that their households did not have enough food to last the week. In 2020, Hopelink, a food assistance provider that serves East King County, reported 2,931,180 meals distributed, 291,680 pounds of fresh produce provided, and 5.5 million pounds of food delivered to the community throughout an unprecedented year.⁶

Health and Wellness

Studies show that higher income areas are more likely to have significantly better health outcomes, such as life expectancy. In East King County, residents are expected on average to live nearly five years longer (83.9) than residents of South King County.⁷ It has also been found that health disparities contribute to reduced income that can result in what is referred to as the health - poverty trap.⁸

In 2019, 97% of Redmond residents reported being covered by either public or private health insurance. A much smaller portion, 3% (2,041 individuals) reported having no health insurance coverage.⁹ In King County, Hispanic adults had the highest rate of non-insured individuals and were six times more likely than white adults to be without coverage. Compared to white and Asian adults, Black adults were more than 1.5 times as likely, and Hispanic adults were more than two times as likely to report unmet medical needs due to cost.¹⁰ Over 1,700 Redmond residents accessed free and/or reduced-cost medical services from HealthPoint, of which 36% were of Hispanic/Latino origin, 14% Asian, and 8% Black/African American.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The rate of frequent mental distress among low-income adults was almost 2.5 times the county average and four times the rate for high income adults.¹¹ Of the racial/ethnic groups in King County, eight out of 10 white adults indicated that they always or usually receive the social and emotional support they need, much higher compared to individuals who identify as Black, Hispanic, and/or Asian adults. Hispanic adults are more likely than the King County average to experience frequent mental distress and less than half of low-income adults feel that they always or usually get the social and emotional support they need. Since the onset of COVID-19, there has been more than 250% increase in calls from Redmond residents to the King County Crisis Line - averaging 3,300 calls/year in 2020 and 2021, compared to about 1,300 calls in 2019. Inequities in mental health based on gender identity and sexual orientation continue to be of concern. In the King-Pierce-Snohomish County area LGBTQ+ adults (ages ≥18) were twice as likely to report feeling depressed, down, or hopeless for more

⁵ Sources: Schachter et al. Increases in Food Needs in King County, WA, 2020.

⁶ Sources: Hopelink, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

⁷ Sources: King County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2021-2022.

⁸ Sources: Khullar et al., Health, Income, and Poverty: Where We Are And What Could Help, 2018

⁹ Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

¹⁰ Sources: King County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2021-2022.

¹¹ Sources: King County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2021-2022.

than half the week compared to non-LGBQ+ adults. Almost 1 in 3 LGBQ+ adults (ages ≥18) reported not getting needed mental healthcare for any reason in the last 4 weeks, whereas 1 in 10 non-LGBQ+ adults reported the same.

Human Service Providers and Funding

To gain a better understanding of the current conditions, several service provider stakeholders were interviewed as part of the new Human Services Strategic Plan. Three out of four of service providers mentioned their organizations were struggling to hire parttime and full-time staff. In addition, their organizations are unable to pay wages high enough to be competitive with other jobs in and around Redmond, or for said staff to afford the cost of living in Redmond (meaning staff usually have to live outside of Redmond). One focus group participant made it clear when they said they were “overwhelmed with staffing issues”. Providers themselves are feeling burn out, fatigue, and a sense of hopelessness. These challenges are even more present as they are faced with more work.

Service providers also expressed difficulties with the municipal funding process. A common and long-standing issue service providers face is the nature of the municipal funding cycle. The application process, a two-year funding cycle that sometimes only provides smaller program-specific financial support with robust reporting requirements for grants, make this necessary source of funding a burden for service providers. While service providers greatly appreciated the availability of emergency funding through the COVID-19 pandemic, they noted it was not a long-term solution to the systemic issues they faced.

Trends

Based on conversations with community leaders, service providers, City leaders, and community members themselves, the following trends emerged.

- Redmond community members are living through and experiencing the impacts of multiple, ongoing crises.
- There are two Redmonds and the detachment between the two is growing. One is visible and celebrated, where community members live in abundance and have easier access to the resources they need, and the other is hidden and stigmatized, where community members struggle to make ends meet and access the resources they need.
- Redmond community members feel increasingly isolated and disconnected. They desire genuine connection with the rest of the community.
- Service providers face significant barriers to meeting their clients’ needs. These barriers are growing more severe due to increasing demand for services.
- Many community members experience barriers to accessing the services they need.
- Inadequate funding continues to be an area of concern.

Policy Considerations

Topics for Policy Considerations

The Existing Conditions reports are developed with input from community members, regional partners, elected officials, appointed boards, city staff, and subject matter experts. In addition, the policy considerations in this chapter draw on the work of the 2022 Human Services Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. A collection of specific topics for policy consideration are listed below. Three overall categories of considerations are also discussed below:

Expanded and Accessible Services: Redmond should support community members to navigate life through multiple, on-going crises so that our community can move forward together.

Strong Sense of Community: Redmond should serve as a convener and connector, so community members feel a sense of welcoming and belonging. The ideal is to a culture where community members can easily access services without judgement, fear, or stigmatization.

Equity. Redmond will foster a community where all – particularly BIPOC and marginalized community members – have access to all Redmond has to offer. The need to achieve equitable outcomes should be an important consideration in the development of human services policy.

TABLE HS-1 HUMAN SERVICES POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

#	Policy Consideration	Themes Supported
Expanded and Accessible Services		
HS-A	<p>Support effective outreach with funding, tools, engagement campaigns, and partnerships, to connect community members to resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate with community leaders who can help connect their community members to services and programs.• Prioritize connections to marginalized communities in Redmond like BIPOC, Latino/a/x, immigrants, and refugees.• Engage with the Community where they are, through community relationships, programs, and outreach campaigns.• Utilize engagement campaigns to amplify the ongoing work of service providers, how to access services, and how to support community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resiliency & Recovery• Equity & Inclusion• Sustainability

#	Policy Consideration	Themes Supported
HS-B	<p>Secure sustainable funding, and prioritize support, for organizations that provide culturally responsive services and provide in-demand services as defined in the Human Services Needs Assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and develop a sustainable funding plan that prioritizes the need for non-profit staffing, addresses one-time emerging needs, and/or addresses the effectiveness of the City's per capita formula approach. • Identify other funding sources (philanthropy, businesses, etc.) and build connections to increase service providers' access to these sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resiliency & Recovery • Equity & Inclusion • Sustainability
HS-C	Increase Human Service capacity and resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resiliency & Recovery • Equity & Inclusion • Sustainability
Strong Sense of Community		
HS-D	<p>Expand the scope of the Human Services Division to focus on increased community connection and support, destigmatize services, and enhance the sense of inclusion, welcoming, and belonging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate, facilitate, and participate in regular small-scale (i.e., neighborhood specific) community meetings and topic-based forums. • Support volunteerism in Redmond by connecting businesses, employees, community members to volunteer opportunities and amplifying non-profits who need support. • Enhance pathways for youth and adults to access local college, scholarship, training, apprenticeships, and additional employment opportunities. • Explore opportunities with education centers, service providers, vendors, local employers, and within the city, to create new and strengthen existing, supported employment and community inclusion services for people with intellectual and development disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resiliency & Recovery • Equity & Inclusion • Sustainability

#	Policy Consideration	Themes Supported
HS-E	<p>Champion diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase representation of BIPOC and other marginalized communities in decision making bodies like the Human Services Commission. • Support community partners and non-profit organizations to create cultural spaces where our diverse community can gather and access services. • Strengthen the capacity of non-profits who provide services relevant for historically disenfranchised communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resiliency & Recovery • Equity & Inclusion • Sustainability